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DOE Seeks Comment on Waste Determination for F-Tank Farm

The Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Operations Office (SR) is seeking public comment on a draft waste determination for wastes from reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel from F-Tank Farm (FTF) at the Savannah River Site.

Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, has authority under Section 3116 of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 to determine that certain waste from reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel is not high-level radioactive waste and may be managed as low-level radioactive waste. This Draft Basis 3116 Document explains DOE's rationale for declaring of residual radioactive waste associated with FTF and ancillary structures as non-high-level radioactive waste. Determining it to be non-high-level radioactive waste enables DOE to manage these wastes in manner that is protective of public health and the environment in an economically feasible manner.

This draft document specifically addresses the residual waste that remains at the bottom of the tanks after the bulk wastes have been removed and tanks have been cleaned to the maximum extent practical. The tanks are then grouted, capped and remain in place.

The FTF is a 22-acre site, which consists of 22 underground radioactive waste storage tanks and supporting ancillary structures. The Secretary's decision only determines whether the residual radioactive waste associated with the FTF and ancillary structures at the time of closure is appropriate for management as non-high-level radioactive waste. Compliance with additional requirements, including approvals by South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and closure requirements under DOE's Atomic Energy Act requirements is required to close the FTF.

The public comment period extends through January 7, 2011. The Department will hold one or more public meetings on this Draft Basis of Determination, dates and locations will be announced at a later time.

The Draft Basis of Determination is available on the DOE website:

http://www.em.doe.gov/stakepages/wmdi_sw_d.aspx?PAGEID=WMDI

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